



**SPECIAL MEETING OF THE COMMON COUNCIL
MIDDLETOWN CONNECTICUT
JANUARY 14, 2016**

The Special meeting Questions to Directors of the Common Council of the City of Middletown was held in the Council Chamber of the Municipal Building on Monday, January 14, 2016 at 7 p.m.

Present

Deputy Mayor Robert P. Santangelo, Councilman Eugene P. Nocera, Councilman Thomas J. Serra, Councilwoman Mary A. Bartolotta, Councilman Gerald E. Daley, Councilman Carl R. Chisem, Councilman Robert Blanchard, Councilman Grady L. Faulkner, Jr., Councilman Sebastian N. Giuliano, Councilman Philip J. Pessina, Councilwoman Linda Salafia, Common Council Clerk Marie O. Norwood

Absent

Mayor Daniel T. Drew, Corporation Counsel Daniel B. Ryan, and Councilwoman Deborah A. Kleckowski.

1. Mayor calls meeting to order.

The Deputy Mayor calls the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m. He asks Councilman Pessina to lead the public in the Pledge of Allegiance.

The Clerk reads the call of the meeting. The Chair declares the call a legal call and the meeting a legal meeting.

2. Public Comment Opens

William Wilson speaks to the Council regarding boards and commissions that don't have full membership; one is Inland and Wetlands and wishes someone would let the Mayor know that there are people interesting in serving. He would like a full board so the city has proper membership requirements.

Krishna Winston speaks on behalf of the Environmental Collective Impact Network. I want to address the renovation of the athletic fields. Now is the time to plan the renovations now the bond has passed. I want to stress the importance of getting expert help for construction and maintaining the fields. The initial construction will be less costly than synthetic turf and if properly maintained can last indefinitely. It is crucial the initial design of the fields be done expertly. Maintenance must be budgeted adequately to protect the investment. She gives a list of questions that should be considered regarding maintenance. She discusses the use of pesticides and irrigation that might be needed.

Councilman Serra asks that MS Winston give her comments to the clerk.

Eleanor Kelsey 241 Higby Road addresses the firing range; her property abuts Tynan Park on the north; she owns additional property abutting Tynan Park and a third that bounds with the reservoir and to the north of that is all private property and to the south is watershed. The property is 200 - 350 higher than the Dingwall Horan Facility. If the \$750,000 is approved without a roof that has sound proofing that the 75% reduction would be ineffective for almost all the properties for all elevations above 368 feet plus the berm and ten foot wall on top of it. It would not reduce the sound levels to a level we can live with. If they kept the sound level to the pistol range, hand guns, she wouldn't be happy with it. The amount of firing at the range is enormous. I am sure Tom Serra will say it is becoming a nuisance. Flash Bombs have been used there. I have energy glass doors on the south side and I can no longer hang decorations on the doors because the sound knocks the suction cups off the doors. From the excessive disturbance, we need to do something for the Police Department, they are entitled to something better than this appropriation can provide. We don't have to pay for the FBI or train them with a facility we pay for which is actually 200 yards short. She quotes from the minutes of the 6 p.m. meeting. This says it is too small. Give them a facility completely enclosed and sound proofed. The general public uses Massatom Road and using the other network roads on the watershed. People are encouraged to use the blue trails and Tynan Park, Wesleyan Open Space all abutting the road as well as the reservoir.

The Chair states you have run out of time. Councilwoman Bartolotta asks that she continue.

MS Kelsey states hundreds utilize the land that surrounds the rifle range. She discusses the Massatom Road use. She states there have been no signs that the road is closed. There are no signs to pass at their own risk. She does not believe the town followed through and the public has used Massatom Road and other roads. The police still need to train and the public is invited to use the roads. She doesn't know what the Risk Manager would think of this and it could be a liability issue. The hours of operation should be limited from 7 am to 7 pm including the months the police need to qualify usually October and November. The recent use has been much improved by Chief McKenna. He has helped silence some of the weapons. Please vote no for the \$750,000. The Chief will research the problem and provide a report. People should be warned about the danger out there. The Town Clerk informed her that contracts are not required to be filed in the Town Clerk's Office and departments are having a hard time locating documents. All business documents should be filed there. Do you know if they have a license or lease to use the facility or a grant? Is it a legal deed for a pistol range? There is a 100 year old map in the Water and Sewer Department done by Town employees would be helpful to inspect before they get lost. Give the FBI back there money to get out from under their control and avoid a court battle. When did the dog training begin and can it be done near the reservoir. I have witnessed a Torrington officer with his dog and was training it there. She has pictures and a map to orient where the range is. The bullets all go to the north.

MS Kelsey states she has something from the Conservation Commission showing where the 380's can go. She asks they take one and pass it along. She asks they review the material, but she would like the information back. She passes along photographs of the area. If the town has discontinued the road how are they trying to impose regulations and trying to control what is going on, on the road.

Jane Harris states she is part of the Environmental Impact Network and speaks to the condition of the playing fields and the responsibility of a consistent policy that would enforce organic lawn care on all playing fields. It is her experience that most of the people think they are doing the right thing and most times it is high use of chemicals and phosphorous and they go into the sound and contribute to pollution. If there is proper supervision and the lawns are properly organized we would limit remediation down the line. Coaches want something that can't be delivered. You need to hire consultants to do this properly. The fields have been treated with chemicals and overuse and suffer from compaction and that needs to be addressed. It will be safer for our kids. She urges the Council to look at towns with organic playing fields and understands that it may be more than a two-step process and will be worth it for the benefit of the kids.

Molly Buckingham speaks about the national discussion about campaign financing and we can do something about it at a local level. People are conflicted because they want to serve, but it costs money. We can make Middletown a role model by supporting a small donor program. Before the budget is finalized we want to ensure the city will implement a small donor program to keep elections in the hands of the residents. Municipal level programs are in place in NYC and New Haven, Albuquerque and Seattle. Local politics is important and they come before you to consider this proposal.

Steven Angle is involved in the issue of small donor program. Most people are frustrated by the program of Citizens United and as I learn more about what has happened at the state and local level, it is really exciting. People can be involved. My daughter, a senior in High School speaking to the Board of Education led me to be here. If you are interested in this issue, we can be a leader and show citizens that their vote and money matters. The idea is modeled on the State-wide programs. The idea would be people running for city wide office would participate voluntary and would have to raise some money to qualify for city funding. They agree not to receive funding from lobbyists or city contractors. It is voluntary and there is an incentive to take part. We have to work on the numbers to find how much would be needed and what oversight is needed. It can work and there are a number of different models. It would be exciting for Middletown.

A member of the Northend Action Team and brings up the traffic light at Rappalo and Grand and Main. When you are turning left or right, it is dangerous. She asks that the timing of the lights be changed so that it stays red while the other side is green.

4. Meeting adjourned.

Councilman Serra moves to adjourn and is seconded by Councilman Chisem. The Acting Chair calls for the vote and it is unanimous, with eleven aye votes, to adjourn the meeting. The meeting is declared adjourned at 7:35 p.m.

ATTEST:

MARIE O. NORWOOD
COMMON COUNCIL CLERK

